TARGETED

by

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Abstract

The document is about the impact of targeted advertising on individuality and the loss of privacy. I describe my personal experience of being influenced by advertisements and how it led me to question my identity. I highlight how algorithms use personal information to categorize people and target them with specific ads, leading to a loss of privacy. I also argue that the internet has provided us with platforms to promote ourselves, but we lose our identity in the process of being boxed up and targeted by advertisements. I conclude by emphasizing the importance of recognizing and spreading awareness about the death of individuality we are experiencing in this day and age.
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INTRODUCTION

From the fall of 2020 until the spring of 2021, I lived in India with my parents. After 8 years apart, the pandemic provided me with the opportunity to spend meaningful time with my family, which included delicious home-cooked meals. In the fall of 2021, I returned to the United States and felt more homesick than I had ever felt before. As Indian food advertising began to flood my social media feeds, I began to miss home even more. I began ordering a lot of high-priced Indian cuisine. After much deliberation with my mother, I decided to begin preparing one meal per day. I was immediately inundated with simple recipes requiring only four to five items, yet I was usually one ingredient short, forcing me to visit the grocery shop more frequently. My groceries were then delivered from Walmart, which had an attractive offer of six months of free delivery for students. I realized that the groceries I had delivered didn't last as long as the ones I had picked up myself. I started going to Walmart on Sundays, and Lyft began asking if I wanted to pre-book my ride to Walmart on Saturdays. I looked up how to meal prep on the internet, and now Hello Fresh won't leave me alone!

Convenience or Annoyance?

It's the best of both worlds.

We place undue pressure on a small number of content producers to make our lives easier. I expect Google to keep me informed about what's going on in the world, Facebook to show me what's going on in my neighborhood, and Youtube to keep me informed about the latest trending music and videos. We overlook the fact that IT IS NOT FREE. The accuracy with which algorithms can forecast user data is astounding. But we can't blame algorithms; they have no idea what's ethical, what's truthful or incorrect, and they can't even distinguish traffic cone images from a slew of others.

Advertisements have been around for a long time; we grew up seeing them on TVs, radios, magazines, billboards, and flyers, among several other spaces. They were deliberately positioned based on demographics, consumer behavior, and a variety of other considerations. The same technique is employed in online advertising, with the exception that it is directly targeted to you.
because they already have all of your information. The majority of people trust a small number of content producers, such as Google, Facebook, and Youtube, to mention a few. They've gathered enough information on us over the years to be able to track our life patterns and predict our next move.

Our expectations of privacy have shifted as a result of targeted advertising. They don't need to listen in on your discussions because they have access to all of your information. They know if you're shopping online, if you're shopping in person, and with whom you're shopping. Age, employment, relationship status, groups/pages/posts you like, location, what websites have you visited before, what browser you're using, and even what computer or phone you're using are all used in advertising to categorize people. On the Internet, the boxes that divide people into groups are virtually invisible. They remind me of mirror boxes, which make you feel like there are thousands of individuals like you in the world while, in reality, you're in one solitary box among many.

The Internet has provided us with platforms to promote ourselves, ways to be heard, a sense of connection with the rest of the world, and a sense of illusory importance. Everything that is shown to us online influences us, and we lose ourselves in the process. Every time we're boxed up and targeted by advertisements, a little of our identity disappears.

My thesis is portraying a hypothetical surrealist crime scene representing humans targeted (influenced) by ads by recognizing and spreading awareness about the death of individuality we are experiencing in this day and age.
So the Philosophy becomes cradle to grave: Let’s get to them early. Let’s get to them often. Let’s get to them as many places as we can get them. Not just to sell them products and services, but to turn them into life long consumers.

- Enola Aird

Growing up with the internet has undoubtedly been one of the best things that happened to my generation. I still remember the excitement of purchasing our first computer, which was as big as a pig, and the joy of playing offline games and painting on it. It was not until later that the internet became an integral part of our lives, and we began to realize the many benefits and drawbacks that come with it.

Today, we rely heavily on the internet for everything from communication and entertainment to education and work. Our online presence has become one of our most valuable assets, and we spend hours browsing the web, engaging with content, and interacting with others. However, as we spend more time online, we become increasingly aware of the cost that comes with it.

One of the most significant costs of using the internet is the loss of privacy and the monetization of our data. The top content providers, such as Google, Facebook, and YouTube, have access to a vast amount of our personal information, including our search history, browsing habits, and online purchases. They use this information to target us with ads and recommendations that are tailored to our interests and preferences, making it more likely for us to buy their products.

As the saying goes, "If you're not paying for it, you're the product." Although we pay our phone companies for access to the internet, the content providers are the ones who make the most money from our online activities. They collect our data, analyze it, and use it to create virtual profiles of us that advertisers can use to target us with ads. This practice has become so prevalent that many of us have become desensitized to it and accepted it as a fact of life.

However, the danger of this practice is that it creates a power imbalance between the content providers and the users. We are not in control of the information we receive, and the content providers have the power to manipulate our decisions by presenting us with biased or false information. For example, when we search for something on Google, we are presented with results that align with our virtual profile, which may not always be the most accurate or truthful information.
The content providers are the highest tier salespeople in the virtual world, using their vast resources and data to manipulate users' behavior and preferences. They collect data on our online activities and use it to categorize us into various groups based on our interests, preferences, and purchasing behaviors. They then use this information to target ads and recommendations to us that align with our virtual profile, thereby influencing our purchasing decisions.

The internet has revolutionized the way we communicate, access information, and conduct business. It has provided us with unprecedented levels of convenience, connectivity, and access to resources that were once inaccessible. However, the internet has also brought with it new challenges that we must contend with. One of the most significant challenges is the issue of data privacy. With the rise of content providers and social media platforms, our personal data has become a commodity that is bought and sold for profit. This has created a power imbalance between content providers and users, where the former has access to our personal information and can use it to influence our behavior and decisions.

Furthermore, the internet has also made it easier for misinformation to spread quickly and easily. Fake news, conspiracy theories, and propaganda can spread like wildfire on social media, and it can be challenging to discern what is true and what is not. It is therefore essential for users to be more critical of the information they consume online and take steps to verify its accuracy and relevance to them. This can be done by fact-checking information, seeking out multiple sources, and being mindful of the biases of the sources we rely on.

In retrospection, while the internet has brought many benefits to our lives, it is not without its drawbacks. As users, we must be vigilant about protecting our privacy, questioning the accuracy and relevance of the information we receive, and being mindful of the power dynamics at play. By doing so, we can continue to benefit from the internet while maintaining our privacy and autonomy.
The process of creating art from recycled materials is not only an eco-friendly and sustainable approach, but it is also a great way to get creative and turn something ordinary into something extraordinary. In this particular case, I have taken delivery packaging boxes that may have ended up in the trash, and transformed them into a work of art with a powerful message.

The precision with which I cut and fit the boxes together speaks to the care and attention I put into my work. By creating smaller boxes within the larger boxes, I have created a layered effect that adds depth and interest to the piece. The mirrors I added take the artwork to the next level, providing a reflective surface that draws the viewer's attention and creates a sense of introspection.

The decision to use larger mirrors in the original boxes and smaller mirrors in the newly created boxes is a thoughtful and intentional choice. It draws attention to the way in which we are often divided by the structures and systems around us, but it also reminds us that we all have a role to play in breaking down these barriers and creating a more equitable society.

Overall, the artwork is a powerful statement about the importance of sustainability, creativity, and social consciousness. It encourages us to think about our impact on the world and to consider new ways of approaching the issues we face. By creating something beautiful and thought-provoking from recycled materials, I have demonstrated the potential for art to be a catalyst for change.
Creating a piece of art that truly captivates and engages its viewers is no easy feat, and it seems as though I managed to accomplish that with this five-month project. The fact that people of different ages were drawn to the artwork is a testament to its versatility and accessibility, as it managed to appeal to a diverse audience with differing tastes and preferences.

It's fascinating to observe how younger people were drawn to the reflections in the artwork, perhaps seeing themselves mirrored within it, while older viewers were attempting to decipher the deeper meaning behind the piece. For me, art has always been a medium for expression and interpretation, and I am extremely excited to have managed to create a piece that sparks curiosity and intrigue in viewers of all ages.

Moreover, I’m happy to have used my artwork as a platform to raise awareness about an important issue such as online privacy. The inclusion of a "confidential" badge with a QR code directing viewers to my website to read about this topic is a subtle yet effective way of conveying my message. In an age where technology is so pervasive, it's essential that people understand the importance of protecting their personal information online, and it's motivating to have taken it upon myself to educate and inform viewers through my artwork.

My piece of art is not just visually appealing, but it also serves a higher purpose, making it all the more impactful and thought-provoking.
The grand finale is an important event, and every detail needed to be perfect. As the designer, I wanted it to turn some heads. One of the critical elements in the setup was the pedestals. They needed to be placed correctly and stand out so that the artworks displayed on them can be highlighted.

Initially, I had placed the pedestals with yellow "Caution" tapes around them, but after consulting with my thesis guide John, we felt that they needed something more to make them stand out. I wanted them to grab the attention of the audience immediately, and knew that I had to do something bold and eye-catching and we decided to paint them red.

Red is a bold color that signifies power, passion, and excitement. It helped me keeping the audience’s focus in the center, making sure it flowed perfectly through the gallery floor plan.
The concept of "Shoot @ Site" is a powerful one that speaks to the increasingly invasive nature of online advertising. In today's digital age, our online behavior is constantly being tracked and monitored by various websites and companies. This information is then used to target us with ads that are tailored specifically to our interests and preferences.

While this may seem like a convenient way to discover products and services that we might be interested in, it also raises serious concerns about our online privacy and security. With each visit to a website, we are essentially putting ourselves in the crosshairs of advertisers who are looking to sell us something.

The idea behind "Shoot @ Site" is to highlight the impact that online advertising can have on our lives. The shooting range targets in the shape of people represent the millions of individuals who are being targeted by advertisers every day. The little disks with logos of content providers that we see only when we go near to the silhouettes signify the power and influence these companies hold over our online lives.

By using these targets, the project aims to raise awareness about the importance of protecting our online privacy and security. It also serves as a reminder that we have the power to take control of our online presence and ensure that our personal information is being used in a responsible and ethical manner.

Ultimately, "Shoot @ Site" is a powerful and thought-provoking project that challenges us to think more deeply about the impact of online advertising on our lives. It reminds us that we have a responsibility to protect our online privacy and security, and that we can take action to ensure that our personal information is being used in a responsible and ethical way.
The "Shoot @ Site" artwork consisted of four laser-cut wood silhouettes resembling targets at a shooting range, each measuring 3.5 feet by 1.5 feet. The silhouettes were designed to have bullet holes, with app logos placed on them. I used laser cutting technology to create precise and intricate designs for the silhouettes. The inclusion of app logos on the silhouettes further emphasizes the idea that online advertising targets users in a way that can be invasive and intrusive. It is a powerful visual representation of the impact of online advertising on our lives. The use of wood, bullet holes, and app logos adds a physical, tangible element to the artwork, making it more accessible and relatable to viewers. The red pedestal also adds an additional layer of meaning as I explained before, making it clear that the artwork is intended to be a warning and a call to action.

Some of the challenges that I faced include finding the right materials to create the silhouettes, ensuring that the laser cutting process was precise and accurate, and researching the necessary permissions to use the logos of various apps on the artwork.

Additionally, there were challenges related to the installation and presentation of the artwork, such as determining the best way to display the silhouettes and ensuring that they were securely mounted on the red pedestal. I made brass supports on my bench which then stood on the pedestals to hold the linear silhouettes stand upright.

Overall, creating a project like "Shoot @ Site" involved a great deal of planning, organization, and problem-solving to overcome any challenges that arose along the way. Despite these obstacles, the end result was a powerful and thought-provoking artwork that encourages viewers to think more deeply about the impact of online advertising on our lives.
The Ruins artwork is a captivating piece that tells a story of a fictitious crime scene through the use of 925 Sterling silver wire sculptures. I hand crafted human-shaped wire sculptures, meticulously arranged them on a rectangular platform that was painted a vibrant red. This choice of color creates a striking contrast against the metallic silver wires, adding depth and interest to the piece.

As one approaches the artwork, a sense of curiosity takes over as the details of each individual sculpture become more apparent. The viewer is drawn into the nuances of the artwork, examining the placement and arrangement of each wire figure. The closer one gets to the piece, the more they become aware of the many little human silhouettes scattered around the platform.

My intention was to provoke a sense of wonderment in the viewer about their own choices and actions. The intricate details of the artwork symbolize the harsh reality of the world we live in today. The tiny human silhouettes are a representation of how we are thrown around like products on the internet. Our data is sold, and our preferences are used to target us for advertising and other purposes.

The Ruins artwork is a hypothetical concept that invites the viewer to question their own choices and the world around them. It represents the turmoil and chaos that we face in our daily lives, and the struggle to find meaning and purpose amidst it all. As people gaze upon this artwork, they are drawn into its spell, forced to come closer to the floor and experience the art in a new and profound way. The artwork is an attempt to use the power of art to convey complex messages and evoke strong emotions in the viewer.
Sketching and Planning: The initial design stage for "The Ruins" involved a lot of sketching and planning. In order to create an artwork that tells a story through wire sculptures, it was important to carefully consider the composition and placement of each figure. Sketches and rough plans were used to experiment with different layouts and get a sense of how the final piece might look. This stage of the design process helped to establish the overall concept for the artwork and set the foundation for the wire sculptures and platform.

Wire Sculpture Creation: Once the overall concept and design for "The Ruins" had been established, the focus shifted to creating the wire sculptures themselves. This involved working with 925 Sterling silver wire to shape and manipulate it into the desired forms. Each sculpture was created and soldered individually, with a focus on adding detail and creating a sense of movement and expression. This stage of the design process required a high degree of skill and patience, as the wire sculptures needed to be carefully polished and stored.

Arrangement and Composition: The final stage of the artwork for "The Ruins" involved arranging the wire sculptures on the red platform to create the desired composition. This stage required a keen eye for balance and visual harmony, as well as a willingness to experiment and iterate until the perfect arrangement was achieved. Once the sculptures were in place, the final piece was ready for display.

THE RUINS, MARCH 2022, 925 SILVER ON WOOD, 5FT X 2FT
The Murder Board is a visual representation of a hypothetical murder scene, containing mind maps, pictures, newspaper clippings, and lots of research materials. The board is an amalgamation of several distinct components, including manufacturing and material testers. It uses chaos as a platform to display handcrafted and thought provoking pieces of jewelry such as brooches, necklaces, cuffs and rings. The intricate details in various pieces and the bold use of red on a neutral background helped to create a realistic and impactful representation of the violence that occurs in our society. The board serves as a reminder that we must be vigilant and take steps to protect ourselves and those around us.
The Murder Board is a fascinating and thought-provoking representation of the unseen violence that happens around us. It is an amalgamation of several distinct components that together create a mural of a massacre. Starting from its inception, the board contained mind maps, pictures, newspaper clippings, research, and much more. It is a visual representation of the various aspects of a murder, from the motive to the weapon used. As I delved deeper into the project, I discovered the importance of manufacturing and material testers. These displays were the next ones I pointed out, using red threads to connect them to the other components. Understanding the hypothetical murder scene we are experiencing and how we might resist it served as the inspiration for the jewelry pieces on the board. The jewelry included brooches, necklaces, cuffs, and earrings, each with their own unique design and own message for the world.

The Murder Board and its collection of jewelry pieces offer a fascinating glimpse into the intersection of art, technology, and social issues. The intricate details and thought-provoking design elements highlight the complex and nuanced nature of the challenges we face in the digital age. The use of materials such as silver, brass, and bullets serves as a powerful commentary on the impact of technology on our lives, while the inclusion of newspaper clippings, mind maps, and research materials creates a multifaceted and dynamic representation of the murder scene. By exploring these issues through the lens of art and fashion, the Murder Board invites us to engage with these important topics in a new and creative way, encouraging us to think critically about the world around us and the role we play in shaping its future.
The brooch is made of 925 sterling silver wire, delicately shaped into a human silhouette, capturing the essence of an individual. The wire is twisted and bent, resembling the chalk silhouette in a crime scene. The silhouette is slightly asymmetrical, representing the uniqueness of every person. I used basic bench tools to solder and polish the brooch.

The handcrafted pin on the back of the brooch is also made of 925 sterling silver wire, wrapped around with enough tension to create a secure and sturdy attachment while also being the right size and point so as to not harm any clothing. The pin is slightly off-center, representing the imbalance caused by the loss of individuality while technically balancing it and holding it upright.

The design represents the dangers of internet content providers manipulating our decisions by stalking our digital behavior and hitting us with ads based on our online activity. It serves as a reminder to be aware of the potential loss of individuality that can result from constant exposure to targeted advertising and to make conscious decisions about what content we engage with online.
The 925 silver cuff on the previous page is an intriguing piece of jewelry that has been meticulously crafted to create a one-of-a-kind design. The silver has been hammered down to create a textured surface, adding depth and character to the piece. The cuff has been treated with liver of sulphur to give it a rustic and aged appearance, which complements the texture of the silver. To add a pop of color, red thread has been wrapped around the inner side of the spring cuff. This not only creates a bold contrast to the silver, but also provides a comfortable cushion for the wearer. The cuff is further adorned with light steel bullets that have been riveted into the silver. These bullets represent the metaphorical "shots" taken by content providers as they target us with advertisements and other forms of media. Overall, the cuff is a unique and thought-provoking piece of jewelry that combines traditional silverworking techniques with modern design elements.

The 4-finger 925 silver ring with content provider logo bullets is a bold and modern piece of jewelry that features a unique design. The ring is made of high-quality silver that has been crafted to create a smooth and polished surface. Each of the four rings is set with a bullet that has a content provider logo on it, which serves as a powerful symbol of the impact of content providers on our daily lives. This ring makes a strong statement about the intersection of technology and fashion and serves as a striking accessory for anyone looking to make a bold statement.

The brass face mask with wooden arcade ticket-shaped confidential tickets is a unique and powerful statement piece that carries a strong message about internet privacy. The mask, made from brass and wire mesh, is not only a striking accessory but also serves as a symbol of silent protest against the lack of online confidentiality available to individuals.

The row of confidential tickets attached to the mask is a powerful symbol of the importance of privacy and the need for greater protection of personal information online. The mask represents a call to action for individuals to take control of their online privacy and take measures to protect themselves from prying eyes and data breaches.

Furthermore, the mask's creation during the COVID-19 pandemic highlights the significant shift to the digital world as people turned to online platforms for work, socialization, and communication. This shift resulted in many individuals sacrificing their online privacy in exchange for convenience and connectivity.

Overall, the brass face mask with confidential tickets is a thought-provoking and impactful piece of wearable art that urges individuals to be more mindful of their online privacy and take a stand for their rights.
I created a giveaway for the viewers using the same CONFIDENTIAL arcade ticket. A powerful badge they could wear stating a warm protest. I wanted to raise awareness about this issue while also providing some DIY privacy-protecting solutions. I worried about having to figure out a strategy to attract visitors to my website for it. I turned 300 of the tickets into pins and put them on paper that I had developed and printed in school. The majority of the audience wearing them at the final performance made me very happy, but talking to others, sharing my concept, and learning about their related issues made me much happier! I came to understand that many people share my love/hate relationship with the internet. When you visit my website and choose the specific project, it offers you a number of options, such as removing cookies or avoiding clicking on adverts, that can prove beneficial in the long term.
In conclusion, the targeted advertising we experience on the internet has a significant impact on our identity and individuality. We are constantly bombarded with ads that influence our choices, preferences, and beliefs. Our personal data is being collected, analyzed, and used to categorize us into boxes, which further perpetuates the loss of our uniqueness and individuality. It is essential to recognize the impact of targeted advertising and to be aware of the information we share online. As consumers, we must demand more transparency and control over our personal data, and as content providers, we must prioritize ethical and truthful advertising practices. It is only by taking a proactive approach that we can prevent further erosion of our individuality and preserve our identity in the digital age.
Bibliography


